

II. LAND USE PLAN PROGRESS

The Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan has 42 sections (Sections 1100-1141). Many of these sections are described in detail in Section III of this report, the detailed geographic matrix.¹

This section describes the six areas of the Land Use Element that are more general in nature. They are:

1. Residential Neighborhoods
2. Commercial Areas
3. Production and Technical Employment Areas
4. Public and Institutional Areas
5. Metrorail Station Area Development
6. Land Use Maps

In the sections below, the objectives for each of these areas are described (and highlighted in bold text), and some of the major activities that have furthered progress are highlighted in bullets.

1. Residential Neighborhoods

To conserve and enhance the essentially satisfactory qualities of the District's many stable neighborhoods, including those qualities that make them unique.

- Beginning in 1999, the Office of Planning reviewed the campus plans for George Washington University at Mount Vernon, George Washington at Foggy Bottom, Georgetown University, American University, and Catholic University. These cases were reviewed and/or revised and approved by either the Board of Zoning Adjustment or the Zoning Commission. During this process, many residents of the stable residential areas adjacent to these universities expressed concern about the objectionable impacts that additional development would generate in their neighborhoods. OP dedicated tremendous staff resources to eliminate or

¹ All Specialized Planning Areas and the Downtown Arts District are included in Section III: The Land Use Geographic Matrix

mitigate these impacts by advocating for more on-campus dormitories, eliminating noise and light impacts generated by sport facilities, and developing strategies to reduce the impacts of off-street parking.

- The Office of Planning proposed draft regulations to strengthen the campus plan regulations. One of the proposals was to initiative a text amendment that would eliminate the siting of dormitories in R-4 zones as-of-right. However, during this same time, George Washington University filed a lawsuit against the District of Columbia regarding the conditions placed on their 10-year Campus Plan. OP, therefore, focused its efforts on this case instead of developing this text amendment. OP is still considering this modification.
- Authority to review university campus plans was moved from the Board of Zoning Adjustment to the Zoning Commission. This type of review is a major undertaking that involves large land areas, multiple buildings, roadways, parking and loading areas, pedestrian pathways and open spaces. Because these types of large, wide-ranging issues often become major land use decisions, the Zoning Commission was considered the more appropriate body to review them, given that the Commission also reviews changes to the zoning regulations and the zoning map.
- Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPs), which spell out commitments from District agencies to address neighborhood priorities, were developed for each of the 39 neighborhood clusters in the city. Many of these clusters are in stable areas. Examples of these commitments include:
 - Developing a Land Regulation Task Force to include area ANCs, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, the Department of Health, and the Office of Planning. One of this group's many tasks would be to review and discuss regulations of concern and share information on existing efforts.
 - Installing speed bumps and other traffic calming measures to reduce neighborhood infiltration by commuters and to slow vehicles speeds.

To enhance other neighborhoods and achieve stability and to redirect public and private initiatives to neighborhoods most in need of improvement and stability.

- Recognizing the challenges of vacant and abandoned housing in many parts of the District, the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development initiated the Home Again program to convert vacant and abandoned properties into homes. This initiative has set in motion a strategic process to identify vacant and abandoned properties in certain neighborhoods; obtain control or ownership of these properties; and renovate them to the benefit of their communities. To date, units have been identified, acquired and sold in Petworth, Randall Heights, Anacostia, Congress Heights, Shaw, Deanwood, Ft. Dupont Park, Woodridge, Lincoln Park, Kingman Park, and Trinidad.
- Housing affordability has become a priority for many District residents. Areas once affordable for middle- to low-income households are now unobtainable. Recognizing this challenge, the Mayor drafted a housing bill and agenda to protect affordable housing and produce new housing for people of all incomes. City Council strongly supported this measure, resulting in the allocation of funds (through the Housing Production Trust Fund) to build affordable housing.
- The Office of Planning has dedicated considerable time and resources to complete neighborhood revitalization plans aimed at improving and stabilizing neighborhoods. These plans include the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (which focuses on building strong waterfront neighborhoods), St. Elizabeths eastern campus (where mixed use and housing will be considered), and the Mount Vernon Triangle (where residential development is being promoted).
- The Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development developed the Strategic Neighborhood Investment Program (SNIP) to build upon the assets of specific neighborhoods in order to create visible and meaningful quality of life improvements within three to five years.

To encourage development of adequate neighborhood shopping and support services in all sections of the District.

- In January 2002, the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development launched *reSTORE* DC, a commercial revitalization program. *reSTORE* helps to revitalize neighborhood business districts and small businesses through organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring of commercial areas. Four components of the program help to achieve success:
 - DC Main Streets, a joint effort with the National Main Street Center, provides comprehensive technical and financial assistance to neighborhood business districts. Five "Main Street" commercial corridors have been designated: 14th and U Street, NW, H Street, NE, Upper 14th Street, NW, 8th Street, NE, and North Capitol Street, NE.
 - The Commercial District Technical Assistance Program provides technical assistance and funding for specific and discrete projects and activities aimed to revitalize neighborhood business districts. Funds were awarded to several neighborhood organizations in 2002.
 - The Commercial Property Acquisition and Development Program provides matching funds for non-profit corporations that seek to acquire, redevelop or build commercial properties in the District.
 - The Small Business Development Program helps business grow and prosper through training programs, workshops, conferences, technical assistance and access to capital.
- The Office of Planning has undertaken a number of planning initiatives designed to revitalize commercial corridors and nodes. These initiatives include the Georgia Avenue Revitalization Initiative, the H Street Planning Initiative, the Takoma Central District Plan, Columbia Heights, the Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study and programmed work at Minnesota/Benning, the Uptown Destination District, Historic Anacostia, Marshall Heights/East Capitol and Congress Heights. OP also has embarked on a transit oriented development (TOD) planning and policy initiative to encourage a mix of uses – including neighborhood retail and other services – in underutilized areas near transit.
- The booklet, *Thrive: A Guide to Storefront Design in the District of Columbia*, was developed to provide guidelines for commercial storefront improvements. These guidelines address signage, lighting, building materials and other elements to improve commercial buildings and encourage redevelopment along the District's commercial corridors.

- Retail revitalization has been accomplished or is planned at a variety of locations, including Rhode Island Place, East Capitol Street, Georgia Avenue, Fort Lincoln, Fort Totten, Tenleytown, Georgetown, Columbia Heights, Skyland, Camp Simms and Old Anacostia.

To protect residential neighborhoods from disruptive uses and to prevent concentrations of nonresidential uses in residential neighborhoods.

- The performance of the Development Review Division has improved dramatically during the past four years. In 2000, the Division was unable to review 40 percent of the cases heard by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, given staff limitations. By contrast, in FY 2002, the Division reviewed 186 BZA and Zoning Commission cases, an increase of more than 300 percent from 2000. Many of these cases were located in or were adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Support from the Mayor and City Council in the form of increased staffing prompted this dramatic increase. In 1999, only two planners worked on cases. Today the division has nine.
- Since 1999, five campus plans were reviewed. OP dedicated tremendous staff resources to eliminate or mitigate impacts by: reducing the number of students that live off campus, advocating for more on-campus dormitories, eliminating noise and light impacts by sport facilities, and developing strategies to reduce off-street parking impacts.

Ongoing and Future Activities:

The Uptown Destination District Strategic Development Plan (Howard Gateway Area) located within both Wards One and Two is scheduled to kick off in May 2003. One of the goals of this plan will be to establish a mixed-use, destination-oriented development program in the area.

The Home Again Initiative (an initiative to convert vacant and abandoned properties into homes) will continue this effort.

2. Commercial Areas

Promote the vitality of the District's commercial areas, including Downtown, and to provide for the continued growth and vitality of the District's economy and employment base.

- Commercial development during FY 1999-2002 has been unparalleled in the city's history. According to the D.C. Marketing Center's report, *Development in the District of Columbia*,² many sectors boomed between 1999 and 2002, when millions of square feet of development was built in the District, including:
 - 4.77 million square feet of retail space
 - 42.9 million square feet of office space
 - 8.86 million square feet of hospitality- and tourism-related space, including hotels, museums and entertainment uses; in addition, 3.73 million square feet of hotels were built in this period

While these numbers demonstrate the continued growth and vitality of the District's economy, it is important to document other initiatives that were developed to facilitate and channel development the coming years:

- As cited above, several neighborhood commercial initiatives have been developed as a part of *reSTORE* DC program: DC Main Streets, the Commercial District Technical Assistance Program, the Commercial Property Acquisition and Development Program, and the Small Business Development Program.
- In 2000, the Office of Planning, in collaboration with the Downtown Business Improvement District, developed the *Downtown Action Agenda*. This document outlines strategies to refine the vision of a vibrant, mixed use "living" downtown, establish direction for new growth and improving links to other city neighborhoods, and identify strategic actions the public and private sectors can undertake to maximize resources and sustain the downtown's economic momentum.

² *Development in the District of Columbia: A Reference Guide*, DC Marketing Center, 2002

- District agencies initiated a planning process for the re-use of the existing convention center site. Steps in the process have included determining the location of a new convention center hotel, working with a Task Force (of local development, urban design and community stakeholders) to develop the policy directives for the site, and issuing an RFP.

3. Production and Technical Employment Areas

To encourage the growth of centers of high technology, research and development, and to provide for essential support services and nonpolluting production activities.

The production and technical employment land use category includes: Restructured industrial land intended to encourage growth industries and industries with a high ratio of employees to land area occupied; warehousing; and other commercial activities that generally do not occur to a substantial degree in other commercial areas as the predominate use.

- The Office of Planning developed, and the Zoning Commission approved, regulations to define and guide the development of electronic equipment facilities. The regulations address building design and placement for the facilities, which are permitted in manufacturing, industrial, and commercial/manufacturing zones as-of-right.
- The Office of Planning met several times with college and university leaders to encourage them to locate similar programs together to create research centers and/or incubators.

4. Public and Institutional Land Uses

To ensure the availability of sufficient land for the District's public improvements programs and operating needs.

Property acquisitions for the District include:

- 401 Farragut Street, NW, acquired in 2002 for the Department of Public Works salt dome.
- Minnesota and Benning Roads, NE, purchased from Metro in 2002 for the Government Center. This 350,000-square foot complex will house several government agencies.
- Georgia Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue, NW, purchased from Metro in 2002 for the Government Center. The current site plan includes private and government offices.
- Land at Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Good Hope Road, SE was assembled in 2002 for the Anacostia Government Center. A 300,000-square foot complex will house several District agencies and retail shops.

To seek to convert surplus District-owned land to productive uses consistent with the Comp Plan.

- The wax museum site project in the Mt. Vernon Triangle is proposed to include ground-floor retail and housing. The Office of Planning participated in the development of the RFP by proposing the mix, density and location of uses.
- Mather Building, 916 G Street, NW. The Department of Housing and Community Development issued a detailed RFP to fill this vacant downtown building. The Office of Planning supported the effort by determining the types of appropriate set of uses that would support the arts and increase downtown housing. The site was sold in 2002.
- RLA Parcels at Columbia Heights. Now managed by National Capital Revitalization Corporation, several District-owned properties adjacent to the Columbia Heights Metro stop are undergoing development. Proposed uses include a grocery store, other commercial uses and residential units.

- Several DC Public School buildings were either sold or leased including:
 - Blow Pierce school was sold to Friendship Public Charter School
 - Burdick school was leased to Excel Institute and subleased to Community Academy Public Charter School
 - Carver school was sold to IDEA Public Charter School
 - Chamberlain Career Center school was sold to Friendship Public Charter School
 - Langley school was leased to Hyde Public Charter School
 - Military Road school was leased to World Public Charter School
 - Rabaut school was leased to Richard Milburn, Ideal Academy, and Barbara Jordan Public Charter School
 - Slater school was leased to ARE Public Charter School
 - Woodridge school was sold to Friendship Public Charter School
 - Woodson school was sold to Friendship Public Charter School
 - Lovejoy school was sold for market rate housing
 - Pierce school was sold for market rate housing
 - Franklin school is currently with City Council
- 1060 Brentwood Road, NE site in Ward 5 was sold in 2000 for economic development purposes (Home Depot and Giant Grocery).
- 500 C Street, NW site was sold in 2000 for the Newseum.

To improve coordination and management of District government land planning and to develop up-to-date facility plans for District agencies and prepare a District-wide public facilities plan.

- The District of Columbia Public Schools developed a Master Facility Plan outlining a strategy to rebuild and update school facilities during the next 10-15 years.
- D.C. Law 12-286 directed the Mayor to appoint a panel to advise the City Council on siting and other issues related to solid waste transfer stations. The Solid Waste Transfer Site Selection Advisory Panel was directed to prepare “comprehensive recommendations to the Council that identify tracts of land suitable for solid waste transfer operations within appropriately zoned sections of the district that safeguard the health, safety and welfare of residents and businesses.” The panel also reviewed the District’s carrying capacity for regional solid waste facilities; the impacts of existing solid waste facilities on local residents; and the District’s need for these facilities. The panel held more than 40 regular meetings in addition to several specialized work sessions to integrate the work efforts of the appointed and ex-officio members. The panel’s recommendations included upgrading and expanding the Fort Totten Station; maintaining the Benning Road Transfer Facility; and building a transfer station at the Southwest Impoundment Lot. The District decided to upgrade the Fort Totten and Benning Road facilities and that work is now underway.
- The Office of Planning has worked with several District agencies to ensure that their projects comply with zoning and historic preservation regulations, support adjacent uses, and minimize traffic impacts. OP also is working on the Government Centers project, which will locate government offices throughout the District to spur neighborhood revitalization.
- The Office of Planning worked with the Department of Mental Health and other agencies to determine the appropriate locations, densities and types of uses on St. Elizabeth’s east campus.

To assure neighborhood sustainability as non-government institutions grow while also promoting the continued contributions made by private institutions toward the economic and cultural vitality of the District.

- *Campus Plans:* To assure neighborhood sustainability, the Office of Planning reviewed five campus plans (see above).
- *Howard University:* Howard University, in association with the Fannie Mae Foundation, is undertaking the Howard University-Ledroit Park Revitalization Initiative, which began in 1998. The university's vision for the Howard Gateway area includes a "town center" complex (featuring retail and housing) on the west side of the 2100 block of Georgia Avenue; a National African-American Museum and Research Center on the southwest corner of 7th Street and Florida Avenue; and a revitalized Howard Theater nearby at T and Wilt burger streets. The University is proposing a new Town Center north of Florida Avenue.
- *Washington Hospital Center:* Increased need for emergency preparedness and the closing of other hospitals in the District has increased the demands on the Washington Hospital Center. After extensive review by OP, the Zoning Commission approved a Planned Unit Development proposal that would allow the Hospital Center to more than double in size during the next 20 years and make roadway improvements to accommodate this growth.
- *George Washington University:* George Washington University has built several projects in the past five years. These include the Learner Health and Wellness Center; renovations and an addition to the Marvin Center; the School of Media and Public Affairs; an addition to the Law School; an addition to the University Parking Garage; the new Elliott School of International Affairs and a residence hall in a new building at 1957 E Street. A new hospital was built on university property on Square 40 south of Washington Circle.
- *Georgetown University:* Georgetown University began construction of the Southwest Quadrangle residence hall project (including 780 new beds) in 2001, with completion expected by fall 2003. The university also applied for a special exception to build the Performing Arts Center. A hearing on the petition was held in January 2003, and a decision is expected in April 2003.

To encourage sensitive conservation and development of the District's waterfronts and shorelines.

- In 1999, the Office of Planning launched a planning effort for the waterfront along the Anacostia River – the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. While most of the property along the waterfront is owned by federal agencies, a memorandum of agreement was developed to ensure coordinated planning and redevelopment of these sites. All five themes of the plan serve this objective:
 - *A Clean and Active River:* This plan seeks to improve water quality, restore the natural systems along the waterfront and complete landscape networks.
 - *Breaking Down Barriers and Gaining Access:* The plan seeks to redesign roads so they become less of a barrier between neighborhoods and waterfront parks.
 - *A Great Riverfront Park System:* The plan seeks to provide special view corridors and vistas and great public and open spaces.
 - *Cultural Destinations of Distinct Character:* The plan seeks to encourage transit oriented development and adaptive reuse, and identify markets for future development.
 - *Building Strong Waterfront Neighborhoods:* The plan seeks to revitalize neighborhoods, create new places to dwell and work along the river.
- *Southeast Federal Center Zoning.* The Office of Planning developed, and the Zoning Commission approved, a zoning change to enable development on 44 acres of federal land for mixed uses. As a part of this effort, a new zone, the W-O district, was created to recognize the sensitivity of the water's edge by allowing only low-density recreational uses to be developed there.
- *Capital Gateway Overlay (Buzzard Point Rezoning):* The Office of Planning developed and the Zoning Commission approved a major rezoning effort to encourage commercial and neighborhood redevelopment, by removing intense uses from the water's edge.

Ongoing and Future Activities:

One recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan Assessment Report, prepared by the Office of Planning and a Task Force appointed by the Mayor and Council, is to develop guidance on public facilities and public facility location as part of the Comprehensive Plan revision.

5. Metrorail Station Area Development

Concentrate planning and development attention on Metrorail station areas which offer opportunities for redevelopment and new growth, particularly in those station areas that have large amounts of vacant or poorly used land.

- Over 6,000 new or restored housing units are planned, completed or underway around Metro stations throughout the District. Specifically:
 - Extensive development has occurred around the U Street/Cardozo Metrorail station, as more than 570 units of new housing is or have been constructed within a 10-minute walk of the Metro station.
 - Projects at other stations include: 700 new and rehabilitated units under development near the Columbia Heights station; nearly 600 new units at Fort Totten; more than 600 new mixed-income homes to replace the public housing complex across from the Capitol Heights station; more than 2,000 new and replacement units to surround the Navy Yard Metro station.
- The Office of Planning developed a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) program to facilitate, coordinate and expand development that encourages transit use. A Task Force appointed by the Mayor worked with OP to identify strategies to promote and encourage TOD across the city by conducting design workshops, developing overlay zones, and drafting a TOD policy for the city.
- The Office of Planning completed a small area plan for the Central Takoma area adjacent to the Takoma Metrorail station. The plan called for housing, retail and parking in proximity to the station.

- With the completion of the original Metrorail System and the construction of the New York Avenue infill station, District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and OP have begun planning for transit system expansion and additional infill. Financial constraints are among the factors that have led the District to emphasize consideration of Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for future transit expansion, rather than new Metrorail lines. In 2001 and 2002, the District and WMATA identified a set of alternative transit expansion corridors that deserve additional study:
 - A Bus Rapid Transit line, convertible to Light Rail, within a rebuilt K Street, between Mt. Vernon Place and Washington Circle
 - A “starter” trolley line between Metro’s Minnesota Avenue/Benning Road station and the Anacostia Metro station. This would provide an important north-south rail transit link to supplement existing bus service, and would give greater access to the central portion of Old Anacostia
 - A continuation of the “starter” line over the Anacostia River via either the 11th Street Bridge and/or the Frederick Douglass Bridge, and along M Street, SE and SW. This would serve new development near the Navy Yard and the Southeast Federal Center, as well as stimulating development in Buzzard Point
 - A BRT, trolley, or light rail downtown circulator

Ongoing and Future Activities

Ongoing initiatives to focus development around Metrorail stations are underway in the Shaw-Howard University station area, the Navy Yard station area, the Waterfront station area, the Stadium-Armory Station area, the Tenleytown/Friendship Heights, Columbia Heights, and the Georgia Avenue/Petworth station area.

In future years, transit-oriented development is expected to continue and expand as a strategy for balanced growth. Key actions that would implement transit-oriented development include:

- *Developing a broad public and civic education campaign to promote the principles of transit-oriented development among residents, developers, public agencies, and financial institutions*
- *Creating the position of a transit-oriented development manager to coordinate transit-oriented development efforts, define appropriate policy, and carry out public education activities*

- *Completing station-area plans for Metrorail stations with potential development opportunities including Fort Totten, Minnesota/Benning station areas, Anacostia, Congress Heights, and Potomac Avenue stations*
- *Reviewing zoning around station areas against development objectives and evaluating zoning modifications that may be appropriate*
- *Participating in regional forums that address transportation and land use policies and planning and coordinating District leadership for change*
- *Encouraging employees to live near work or live near transit through employer-assisted housing programs*
- *Enhancing and expanding the District's public transit system*

6. Land Use Maps

Map 1: Generalized Land Use Map

Section 1139.2 of the Comp Plan requires that Map 1 be revised to incorporate changes in the approved amendments. The Council approved a total of 65 amendments to the Generalized Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 1998 in December 1998, effective April 27, 1999.

Most of the 65 amendments were generated by OP staff during the Comprehensive Plan amendment process. Most of the map amendments were technical corrections to the map to correct graphic errors. In other cases, an area of the map had an incorrect level of density or a type of land use specified.

Map 2: Specialized Land Use Policies Map

Section 1140 deals with Specialized Land Use Policies Map (Map 2).

Section 1140.2 describes five amendments to Map 2: (a) revising the boundary of the Central Employment Area as amended in Section 906.3; (b) adding the boundary of the Downtown Arts District; (c) amending the boundary of the George Washington University campus boundary to conform with the boundary approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment; (d) adding an existing multi-neighborhood commercial center symbol on Wisconsin Avenue between River Road N.W. and Brandywine Street, NW; and (e) adding an existing multi-neighborhood commercial symbol on Connecticut Avenue, NW between Albemarle Street, NW and Yuma Street, NW. The addition of these multi-neighborhood center symbols at Tenleytown and Van Ness were map error corrections of a previous omission and do not represent policy changes. Section 1140.3 provides for adding the boundary of the Downtown Arts District to the map legend.

Progress:

In response to these amendments, the Office of Planning prepared two new maps dated February 2001. The Mayor transmitted these maps to the Council in February 2001. The Office of Planning also transmitted copies to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission Chair Persons and to the D.C. Library for distribution to all branch libraries.

The Council held a hearing on the two Comprehensive Plan land use maps on May 22, 2001. Written comments were received from the public about three small inaccuracies in the land use map. The Office of Planning reviewed the comments and recommended that the changes be made through the formal amendment process the next time the Comprehensive Plan is amended. The primary issue discussed at the hearing was that the maps showed the existing ward lines. By that time, it was clear that there would be changes in some of the ward lines that would become effective in January 2002.

The Council requested that the maps be revised to show both old and new ward lines. The Office of Planning made these changes and new maps were prepared, dated January 2002. The Mayor transmitted these maps to the Council in August 2002 and copies have been sent to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission Chair Persons and to the D.C. Library for use in the Washingtoniana Division and in all branch libraries. Copies are available for sale at the Office of Planning.

In summary, the revision of the two land use maps has been completed as indicated in Sections 1139-1141 of the Land Use Element of the District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan.

Ongoing and Future Activities:

As part of the Comprehensive Plan revision, the maps will be reviewed. Determinations on how or whether to modify the maps will be made at that time.